



## Scaredy Squirrel Squirrels

**Subject(s):** Language Arts, Science, Social Studies

**Grade Level(s):** K-3

### Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze the pros and cons of taking risks.
- Students will make text-to-self connections.
- Students will analyze the changes in Scaredy Squirrel from the beginning of the movie to the end of the movie.
- Students will practice sequencing to assist comprehension.
- Students will compare and contrast fiction and nonfiction texts.

### Fiction Resource

#### *Scaredy Squirrel*

Written and Illustrated by Mélanie Watt

Grades: preK-3; Ages: 5-8

Lexile Level: AD560; Guided Reading Level: M

Themes: animals, humor, taking risks, confidence

Running time: 7:00

Plot Summary: Scaredy Squirrel stays in his tree. It is safe there. No tarantulas, no poison ivy, no green Martians, no killer bees. In his tree, there are plenty of nuts and a nice view. Unfortunately, it's not very exciting in his tree, but Scaredy Squirrel doesn't mind too much. He even has a well-stocked first aid kit in case of an emergency. But one day, something *does* go wrong, and Scaredy Squirrel is forced to flee his tree—and learns something important about himself in the process.

### Nonfiction Resource

#### *Squirrels*

By Derek Zobol

Grades: 1-2, Ages 5-7

Lexile Level: 410; Guided Reading Level: H

Description: Introduces readers to basic facts about squirrels.

### Before Viewing the Video

1. Discuss taking risks with students. Define what it means to take a risk and ask students about risks that they've taken in their lives. Brainstorm with students about different times and reasons that people take risks. Then discuss the pros and cons of taking risks. Scribe students' ideas on a t-chart. Guiding questions:
  - What are risky activities that people do?
  - Why do you think that people take risks?
  - How can taking risks be helpful? How can it be dangerous?
 Tell students that they are going to watch a movie about a squirrel who is terrified of taking risks. Encourage students to watch and

listen for ways that his life is positive because he doesn't take risks and ways that his life is negative.

2. Preview these other important vocabulary words:

**advantages:** good things or qualities; benefits

**disadvantages:** bad things or qualities

**familiar:** known; not strange

**glide:** to move smoothly and quietly

**incredible:** unbelievable; amazing

**predictable:** happening in an expected way

**prepared:** ready

3. Review text-to-self connections with students. Ask them to share with each other about things that they're scared of. Create a class list of "Things That Scare Us." Ask:

- Why are you scared of \_\_\_\_\_?
- Do you have any experience with the thing(s) you're scared of?
- How do your fears affect your life or the choices you make?

Encourage students to make connections with Scaredy Squirrel's fears. Push them to make their connections deeper by thinking about whether all of Scaredy Squirrel's fears are reasonable, and if any of their own fears are unfounded.

## After-Viewing Activities

1. Practice the comprehension strategy of sequencing with the children. Write the following sentences on sentence strips, or copy pictures from the book *Scaredy Squirrel* that show each event. Mix the sentence strips or pictures up, read or describe them aloud with the students, then have them rearrange the sentences in the correct order.

1. Scaredy Squirrel never leaves his nut tree.
2. Scaredy Squirrel does the same thing every day.
3. Scaredy Squirrel sees a killer bee.
4. Scaredy Squirrel jumps out of the tree.
5. Scaredy Squirrel discovers that he can glide.

As an extension, give students a worksheet with these same sentences and pictures to match. After doing the group activity, the students can cut out the sentences and pictures, match them, and paste them in the correct order.

2. Did they hear the new vocabulary words? Did it help them to know what those words meant before they watched the movie?
3. Use a T-chart to compare/contrast how Scaredy Squirrel changed from the beginning of the book to the end of the book. Label one side of the T-chart "Scaredy Squirrel in the Beginning" and the other side "Scaredy Squirrel at the End." Guiding questions:
  - How can you describe Scaredy Squirrel at the beginning of the story? What are some adjectives that you can use?
  - Do Scaredy Squirrel's fears change from the beginning to the end of the story? Why or why not?
  - How does Scaredy Squirrel's life change?
  - What are some adjectives you can use to describe Scaredy Squirrel at the end?
4. Have students continue the adventures of Scaredy Squirrel, in a comic strip form. First, students can illustrate the stages of the next adventure that Scaredy Squirrel goes on. Provide them with paper that is broken into boxes, as a comic strip. Number the boxes to aid the students in sequencing. After students have drawn the illustrations, have them tell the story orally to a partner. Then, students can add character dialogue or thoughts, or they

can write a one-sentence caption for each picture. Students should color their comic strips. These can be displayed on a classroom bulletin board, or in a special library of student work.

## Paired-Text Activities

1. Review with students the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Explain that fiction tells about things that are imaginary, or make-believe, while nonfiction tells about things that happen in real life. A nonfiction book contains true facts about a subject.
2. After students have read *Squirrels*, draw a T-chart on the board or on chart paper. Label one side of the T-chart "Nonfiction" and the other side "Fiction." Give students examples of things that happen in *Scaredy Squirrel*, and ask them if they are fiction or nonfiction.  
Examples:  
Scaredy Squirrel makes an emergency kit.  
Scaredy Squirrel makes a daily schedule.  
Scaredy Squirrel uses binoculars.
3. Record these examples in the "Fiction" section of the T-chart after students give their responses. Now ask students for examples of things that they learned from *Squirrels*. Record the students' responses in the "Nonfiction" section. Discuss with students the differences on the T-chart.
4. Conclude by having students draw scenes from *Scaredy Squirrel* and *Squirrels*. Post the drawings on the appropriate sides of the T-chart.

## Further Research

Explore with the class the related Web links about squirrels that accompany this selection.

## Assessment

Have the students play the Puzzlers educational games about *Scaredy Squirrel* and *Squirrels*. Review their results to assess their comprehension of the words and events in the story, as well as their ability to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction.